

Helping people with barriers to employment and community inclusion since 1948

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March is Developmental Disability Awareness Month

On February 26, 1987, President Ronald Reagan proclaimed March as Developmental Disability Awareness Month. Now in its 28th year, the proclamation called for people to provide understanding, encouragement and opportunities to help persons with disabilities to lead productive and fulfilling lives.

Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month recognizes the diverse contributions, capacity and value of people with developmental disabilities, in schools, workplaces, houses of worship, government and throughout all aspects of our community.

March is a time to take extra measures to raise awareness about the rights of people with disabilities. Celebrating the abilities and contributions of people with developmental disabilities can enrich our community, enhance our diversity, and make us stronger. At AccessAbility, we believe everyone deserves the chance to be self-sustaining, share their abilities in fulfilling ways, and to enjoy life.

Skip Groves of the Groves: Longtime Supporter of AccessAbility's Mission



The Groves family were pioneers in a time when inclusion was not a common objective of society. They were and continue to be integral to the existence of AccessAbility (AAI), formerly the Cerebral Palsy Association. In 1949, Mary Groves, an AAI person served, approached her father for support of the mission. Since then, the Groves Foundation has continuously given generously to AAI, funding operations and key projects, volunteering at and sponsoring events, and donating to the Evening Stars programming which facilitates evening social activities for persons served. We had an opportunity to sit with Skip Groves to learn more about why he and the Groves Foundation are such steadfast supporters of our mission.

What is your first memory of AccessAbility (AAI)?

A: When I was 13 or 14 years old, I visited the facility for a tour. I was impressed with seeing a lot of people in wheelchairs and other disabilities working.

Why do you support AAI as opposed to other causes?

A: My Aunt Mary had Cerebral Palsy at a time when it was not really seen much in public.

People were not accepting of and didn't understand the disability. Having a place to go where she was accepted and could work was really important.

Why do you believe our cause is so important?

A: Simply because a job means so much more to these individuals than anyone else. They show up sick and with some barriers and still work very hard. These jobs enrich their lives and give them purpose. We firmly believe the organization providing either opportunities to work in the community or in a sheltered workplace are essential to teaching them so much and to adding joy to their lives.

What would you say to others who may be considering AAI and its mission?

A: AAI is an all-inclusive place for individuals who have physical or cognitive disabilities to have fulfilling jobs and social interactions with individuals like them. It is one of the best places to go and is one of the longest running sheltered workshops or programs in the state. [AAI is] well-organized, well-run, and has been around for over 70 years with continuous service to individuals.

Is there anything else you would like people to know?

A: The Groves Foundation is firmly committed to helping AAI in all its endeavors and has supported AAI for over 70 years with a continued outlook to help them. AAI fits into the Foundation's purpose and mission and is a shining example of a good organization.

To learn more about The Groves Foundation, including about its learning academy devoted to educating children with learning disabilities, go to **Groves-Foundation.com**.

Meet Our S.T.E.M. Engineers



Individuals in our Day Support Services program recently are participating in weekly Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (S.T.E.M.) activities, focusing on different areas of science

While learning about different types of bridges, we built our own Truss Bridge and named it the AAI ACE Bridge!. Everyone was proud of their contribution and all engineers names

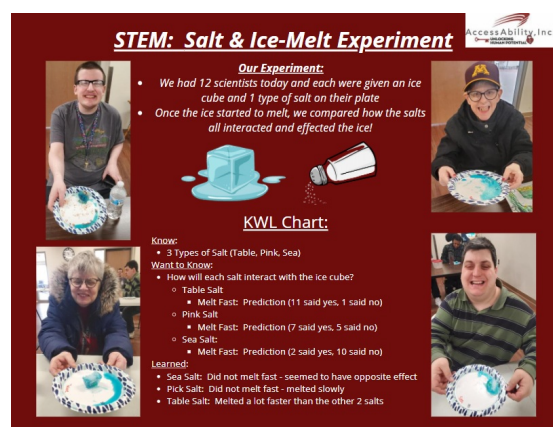


2021 Team Member of the Year: Caitlin Baker

Caitlin Baker was chosen by her co-workers as AccessAbility's 2021 Team Member of the Year.

Caitlin, a Designated Coordinator/Case Manager, started with AAI as a part-time temporary Vocational Training Specialist in 2015. After earning a Bachelor of Science Degree with a focus on

have been placed on the bridge. The bridge masterpiece is on display in the AccessAbility facility.



Twelve scientists participated in the S.T.E.M. Salt & Ice-Melt Experiment activity to see how different types of salt interact with ice. Each scientist was given an ice cube and one type of salt. Once the ice started to melt, a comparison of how the salts interacted and affected the ice. Each individual got a special surprise when the ice melted!

Special Education, she joined AAI full-time in 2019.

Here is what Caitlin's co-workers had to say about her:

"She is always willing to lend a helping hand, is kind to Persons Served, is a wonderful teacher and leads by example."

"Caitlin will be one of the first people to volunteer to help out. She always makes herself available to help out those on her case load. She has many wonderful qualities that go with AccessAbility's Mission."

"Caitlin is a Case Manager that continually does her job with a smile, is a great partner to operations in supporting our persons served and jumping in where needed, and is so patient and kind to others--both staff and the people we serve.

Thank you and congratulations to Caitlin!

Mission Spotlight: Morris

Morris and his wife and three children moved to the U.S. in December of 2019 from Liberia with the help of Minnesota Council of Churches. He was out of a job for more than a year and had a strong desire to work. It was important to him to have a job to support his family. Morris, who is currently going to school and learning English, was referred to AccessAbility's Job Development Placement program through Vocational Rehabilitation Services in October of 2021.

Working with his Job Developer, Morris began building his resume and applied for jobs. Within a few weeks, Morris became a full time employee at Amazon. He says that he really enjoys his job and feels happy and successful. Morris has a home and a job to support his family. He is very happy to have been connected with AccessAbility to help him achieve his goals.



2022 AccessAbility Events

5K Run, Walk 'n' Roll

June 18, 2022

N. Mississippi Regional Park

Imagine Design Launches New Products

AccessAbility's Imagine Design business segment provides training and work opportunities for program participants. We design, manufacture and distribute our unique gift products to both the wholesale and retail markets.

December and January were busy months for the team as we launched 14 new product families. Our workforce was engaged in various manufacturing operations such as sawing, laser cutting, UV printing, painting, assembly, packaging, quality control, order entry, order picking, and order shipping to locations around the world.

You can find our products in gift stores around the country and also on Wayfair, Walmart.com, and Amazon, as well as, our own retail website.

Please see our retail website here: www.imagine-design.org

Minneapolis, MN

On-site Check-in: 8:00 AM
Opening Ceremony: 9:00 AM
Runners Start: 9:15 AM
Walk n' Rollers Start: 9:30 AM

Online registration available soon.



2022 Annual Gala
September 30, 2022

Cornhole Tournament
July 2022

More details coming soon!

Honoring 2022 Funders

Thank you to the **F.R. Bigelow Foundation** for their grant to AccessAbility for our Project Connect program. Project Connect helps at-risk and vulnerable adults integrate into the workforce and their communities.



A Message from the President:

March is Developmental Disability Awareness Month and I invite you to celebrate it with us. People with disabilities seek to achieve personal success through education, meaningful work, and family and community involvement. AccessAbility's ongoing commitment to individuals with disabilities is embodied by our mission to provide opportunities for self-sufficiency for people with barriers to employment and community inclusion.

How can you observe National Development Disabilities Awareness Month?

- Learn more about the rights of Americans with disabilities. The Americans with Disabilities Act was passed in 1990, making it illegal to discriminate against people with disabilities.
- Volunteer for an organization that supports people with disabilities. If you have a

special skill that could help support our mission, AccessAbility could use your help.

- Make a contribution to an organization that supports people with disabilities.

Contact AccessAbility at 612-331-5958 for more information about volunteer opportunities or to make a contribution.

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